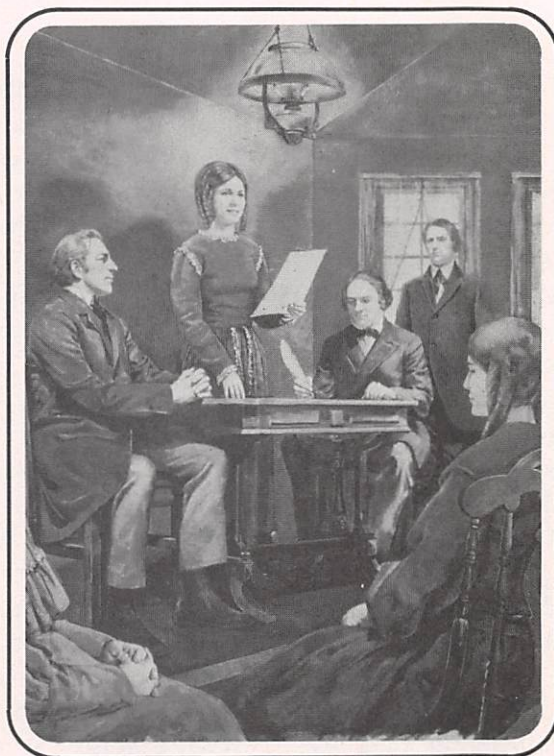


The Relief Society

By Goldie B. Despain

(Note: One hundred and thirty years ago, on March 17, 1842, the Relief Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized through the Prophet Joseph Smith, to bless women and their homes the world over.)



To speak of this society
Is to speak of love,
For this society began with charity
And a woman's heart
And a woman's hands.
As woman whispered her longings
To the Prophet,
In gladness
He called down the keys of the kingdom
For woman in this society.
Then he spoke to her:

"Keys—

That you may detect all that is false;
Resist all that is evil. . . .
An innocent soul cannot be overthrown.
Woman of this society,
Improve your light and wisdom,
Increase in innocence,
Increase in virtue,
Increase in goodness.
Save yourself.

"In your bosom God planted
Tones of love.
Live up to the warm gift within.
Angels will encircle you;
God will gather you to him.

"Woman of this society,
Magnify your calling.
Labor with those near—
Your friends and acquaintances.
Cradle your fellow-creatures to your bosom;
Be indulgent parents to their failings—
For how precious are the souls of men.

"As swift as rushing waters,
Knowledge and intelligence shall flow down
To vanquish the blackness of day:
Widows shall not weep,
The sheaf shall be threshed for the hungry,
Wounded souls shall be healed,
Hidden sorrow shall cease,
The wilderness become gentle."
And the Prophet's voice came golden,
And woman listened.

"Let the heavens witness!
Record on high,
Engraven with a diamond pen!
Never have I been in similar circumstances.
Never have I given such instructions.
Fresh glory mantles the world
And bids sadness away
And receives the treasures of clean hands,
Which grow stronger and stronger
As they erase bitter complaints
And pain of heavier groanings.

"Crown of the world—woman of this society,
Go softly all of your years,
For these things are the life of the spirit."

The Meaning of Love

Clark Swain

A song tells us that "love is a many-splendored thing." In a humorous way love has been referred to as a supersaturated solution of sentimental slush. It has also been described as an insane desire to squeeze orange juice out of a lemon. Throughout the centuries poems have been written, songs have been sung, mountains have been climbed, and battles have been fought because of love. Even murder and suicide have been committed in the name of love.

We do not always think in an accurate way about love. One of the incorrect and irrational attitudes we tend to have is that love is merely a mystical feeling, a mysterious power that takes over; and when it comes, we "fall into it," helpless to control it. We are prone to think that it can vanish as mysteriously as it came and that we are helpless to prevent its leaving.

A number of months ago a woman came to me for counseling. She explained that she

had fallen out of love with her husband and had fallen in love with another man; she and the new man were considering divorcing their marriage partners so they could marry each other. Each had several children—ten children were involved—and yet they were considering giving up these children and their partners because they had fallen in love with each other. The woman felt that she was as helpless to learn how to love her husband once again as she was helpless to terminate her love for the other man.

Another individual who came for counseling told me that he was thinking about divorcing his wife because, he said, "I don't think I love her anymore," as if it were impossible for him to do anything to change his feeling. Such a person needs to learn the meaning of real love. We need to stop thinking of love as a mysterious power that has control over us. We need to think of love as a way to treat

other people, rather than as something that happens to us; then we will begin to have power over our loving.

Those who conclude that love cannot be defined—that there is no way to explain it and it is something we cannot understand—are those who think incorrectly about love, who think of it as a mystical feeling, a mysterious power, a trap into which one may fall. Those who think of love as it really is can define it, explain it, and understand it.

It helps if we think of a person as being loving, or if we think of one as either having ability to express love or lacking this ability. One of the most important things to look for in a marriage partner

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